Introduction:

Graduate students are a valuable part of our HKN community and local chapters. This document outlines the benefits for inducting graduate students members (GSMs), overviews the requirements for induction, provides mechanisms for supporting and synergizing with GSMs, and answers frequently asked questions regarding GSMs.

Why should your chapter induct GSMs?

GSMs provide many benefits to a chapter:
- GSMs provide more continuity to the chapter - graduating less quickly than undergraduate members who are typically inducted as juniors or seniors.
- GSMs can mentor or advise younger chapter members through their additional class, research, or industry experiences.
- GSMs bring contacts from their previous academic or professional activities, which chapters may leverage to build new relationships and/or plan events.
- Many GSMs have leadership experience and can help manage and grow the chapter, as well as plan events.
- New graduate students, in particular, are often looking for a community at their new university. By inducting them, you can gain a very active and passionate member!

Graduate Student Invitation Requirements:

As per the [IEEE-HKN Operations Manual](#) and [Process Manual](#), the invitation requirements for graduate student members are as follows:
1. Graduate student candidates must be working toward an advanced degree in one of the IEEE-designated fields of interest, as defined by the [IEEE membership qualification](#).
2. Graduate student candidates must have completed the equivalent of one half of one academic year (e.g., one semester) of full time study at the school-of-study wherein the chapter operates (e.g. School of Engineering, etc).
3. Graduate student candidates must be endorsed by the Head of the academic department wherein the student conducts the majority of their studies.

Graduate Student Induction Requirements:

While the invitation requirements for members are standardized across the entire HKN organization, the induction requirements vary from chapter to chapter. For example, some chapters require candidates to take exams, make plaques, or complete a certain number of activity hours or service hours with the chapter in order to be inducted. However, a common practice is for chapters to have reduced requirements for graduate student candidates (e.g.,

requiring fewer activity hours than undergraduate candidates or waiving plaque making requirements). From HKN HQ's perspective, the only mandatory requirements is that the graduate student inductee must:

- Pay the HKN and local induction fee
- Participate in an induction ritual held by the chapter

The process for inducting GSMs at your chapter should be clearly outlined in your chapter documentation (e.g., your operations manual or constitution). If it isn't, consider making an amendment to your chapter documentation to ensure that this process is clear and followed consistently from year to year.

Providing Value to GSMs:

While inviting graduate students to participate in a chapter enables a number of benefits, it is also important for a chapter to additionally accommodate the unique needs and desires of their graduate student community. Results from a recent poll indicate that graduate students often look in HKN for the following:

- Networking and job opportunities
- Community and social ties
- Opportunities to share their experiences and research
  - We are currently accepting applications to have grad student's research featured in The Bridge magazine! Reach out to Katelyn Brinker under Contacts for more information.
- Mentorship and career development

Fortunately, common place events can be easily modified to address a mixed or GSM only audience. For example:

- Inform companies that graduate students will participate in any meet-and-greet. Most companies are well prepared to address both audiences simultaneously and advertise specific positions for different degree levels.
- Hold mixers and invite other graduate societies. Alternatively, reach out to relevant graduate clubs on campus and ask about joining their social events.
- Give GSMs the opportunity to practice their research talks in front of your chapter or with some invited professors. This will help GSMs feel more comfortable in public speaking and give your undergraduate members the opportunity to learn about research on campus.
- Work with any on-campus career development offices or alumni to hold c.v. reviews and mock interviews for post-graduate positions such as roles in academia.

In addition, HKN is developing a monthly seminar series for graduate students entitled The HKN Grad Lab, starting in September 2021.

Recruiting Materials:

- Recruitment Materials are in the process of being developed. Reach out to Joseph Greene or Katelyn Brinker under Contacts for more information.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. **My department can't generate a list of graduate students who have completed one semester of full time study. How should we determine which graduate students are eligible to join our chapter?**

   One way to get around this is to ask for a full list of grad students from your department and reach out to them all or have your department reach out to all graduate students on your behalf. In your communication you can let the grad students know that only students who have completed one full semester of study in their program are eligible. If needed, you can ask for proof or confirmation that they've met this requirement before they start the process of joining your chapter.

2. **What are the criteria the department head should use when determining whether or not to endorse graduate student candidates?**

   Much like undergraduate participation in HKN, potential candidates should be judged under our core tenants of Scholarship, Character and Attitude without artificially inflating criteria to limit participation. If a department head, faculty advisor, or other administrator asks what criteria they should use, give them these brief descriptions:
   > *Scholarship:* The academic capacities of a prospective candidate. However, HKN views this tenant as satisfied for graduate students through their acceptance into an advanced degree program.
   > *Character:* The moral excellence of the prospective candidate. Serving one's society is a defining characteristic of HKN and prospective candidates should positively affect communities near and/or far.
   > *Attitude:* The manner in which the prospective candidate carries themselves in their daily interactions.

   A [sample letter of endorsement](#) for graduate student members is provided on the HKN website.

3. **Our faculty advisor/department is under the impression that HKN is only for undergraduate students. How do we change this?**

   Start by showing them this document and the HKN governing documents. HKN is also for graduate students and professional members (i.e., faculty can also be inducted). It should also be noted that who HKN is for does NOT vary from university to university.

The only reason a chapter wouldn't induct graduate students is if their institution does not offer graduate degrees in the IEEE technical fields of interest. As a good practice, your chapter should form a working relationship with the dean of your graduate program directly. While you should not use this connection to cut out your faculty advisor or department, it will help get everyone on the same page about HKN.

If they're still not convinced, reach out to your [regional governor](#) and ask for their help in talking with your advisor and department.

4. **By inducting graduate students, will we detract from our undergraduate members?**

On the contrary, inducting graduate students will implicitly add value to both your chapter and undergraduate members! Graduate students bring a wealth of academic and industrial knowledge, previous leadership experience, and connections from their past experiences. This makes them excellent advisors to younger students, potential chapter officers, and liaisons for the chapter. Many graduate students are also looking for a new community to join when moving to a new university. Inducting them early can build them into dedicated members who contribute to the chapter for many years.

5. **If a graduate student was inducted into HKN at a different chapter, do we need to reinduct them to join our chapter?**

Fortunately, no. Once a student or professional is inducted into HKN they are HKN for life, regardless of where they live or what university they belong to. If you know of any incoming grad students or transfer students who are already HKN, you should invite them to participate in your chapter initiatives. Similarly, if you discover any professional HKN members in your local community, you should invite them to engage with your chapter, too.

6. **While chapters can induct students from all the IEEE fields-of-interest, do we have to?**

The short answer is no. Oftentimes, chapters only induct from a select set of majors at their university. Reasons for this include the following:
   ● There may be other honor societies for other majors and the HKN chapter does not want to compete with them.
   ● Getting the list of eligible students for each major requires having a contact in that department that can provide you with the list. This isn't always the case and sometimes certain departments don't want to provide the list.
   ● Reaching out to more departments requires more effort from the chapter and not every chapter has the bandwidth to do this.
   ● Providing technically interesting events for a large diversity of dissimilar majors can be difficult to maintain.

However, inducting from more majors can also have advantages, such as helping you grow your chapter and growing your volunteer resources. Also students from other programs bring new connections, broaden the scope of your programs, and provide new opportunities for service. If your chapter has the resources to expand your list of inducted majors, we encourage you to do so!

Contacts:

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